This approach focuses on exploring the concerns people of faith have for violence against women, children, and men in their respective communities. While women and girls make up the vast majority of victims, boys and men, and especially gay, lesbian and gender non-conforming people are targets for abuse. As people called to care for all of God’s children, are we aware of how others members of the Body of Christ are affected by verbal abuse and physical violence?

This approach requires dialogue about practical ideas for acting on what we know to be true. What might the congregation do? Are there people with particular gifts to help? In some cases, the congregation might feel called to support victims or survivors. Yet another focus might be prevention and working with people who would benefit from help to resist committing acts of gender-based violence. What are the possibilities of the church’s ministry relative to gender-based violence?

This approach is tough, but it reflects the ministry to which Christ calls us. The Church has a prophetic as well as a pastoral vision to exercise in society and therefore acts as a corporate citizen. What role might the church play in contributing to the development of laws and practices? How might we advocate policies designed to reduce gender-based violence among leaders in businesses, educational institutions, athletic organizations, the military, and the media? With which organizations might the church collaborate?

### Approach 1:
**What do we need to learn?**

**ACTIONS**
- Engage in education through dialogue, analysis, and careful study of the social and religious factors that contribute to various forms of gender-based violence.
- Provide a safe space for survivors of sexual assault to share their experiences.
- Include the issue of violence against women and of gender-based violence more broadly in sermons, catechetical instruction, and theological curricula.
- Invite local resource people to share secular theories and practices to address gender-based violence.
- Support and teach about healthy relationships, including sexual relationships.
- Are there other ways to promote understanding?

**DRAWBACKS**
- People might be resistant to discussing such a sensitive subject.
- Sharing personal details might compromise the privacy of survivors.
- Some would argue that the church should avoid teaching such a complex issue.
- Some believers object to secular theories that do not recognize the value of religion.
- There are those who contend that the church is not a place for psychology and sexuality education.

### Approach 2:
**What do we feel compelled to do as a congregation?**

**ACTIONS**
- Make certain pastors and church leaders know where to refer people who need immediate help.
- Put in place and enforce congregational policies and practices that promote safe and healthy congregations.
- Provide victims’ support and violence prevention training for staff members.
- Provide safe spaces for people to share their experiences of being victimized.
- Dedicate an annual focus time for gender-based violence prevention.
- Provide a rehabilitation program for men prone to or convicted of violence against women.
- What other ideas do you have?

**DRAWBACKS**
- Some communities have limited or no resource for referrals.
- Policies do not guarantee compliance.
- The cost of training might be prohibitive.
- Confidentiality could easily be compromised and a victim’s privacy damaged.
- Some would argue that prevention requires more time and attention.
- Some church members believe the church is not equipped to handle such a difficult responsibility.

### Approach 3:
**How might we advocate government and other officials?**

**ACTIONS**
- Collaborate with local experts in care and advocacy in order to respond to survivors’ needs.
- Advocate accountability measures in area universities relative to rape and exploitation of women.
- Write letters to or dialogue with elected officials at all government levels regarding laws and practices.
- Promote and help fund and develop organizations and facilities in support of domestic and gender-based violence victims.
- Organize groups in church and society to work against sexism and violence.
- What other advocacy measures come to mind?

**DRAWBACKS**
- Community agencies might be resistant to working with faith communities.
- Universities might be uncomfortable with ideas and advocacy from people outside the institution.
- Elected officials might have other priorities.
- Many people worry that the church has limited funds.
- Some might simply not know where to start to address the epidemic of gender-based violence.